

spread over the hill They took a horse from
Johannes,
but afterwards restored it on certain
conditions. Farther
on we met a number of Kurds, with thirty fat
sheep and
some cattle, which they were driving off from
Marbishu.
Then the *katirgis* said that they would go no
farther than
the village, for they heard that robbers were
lying in wait
for us farther on!

In the wildest part of the gorge, where
two ravines
meet, there is fine stoneless soil, tilled like a
garden; the
mountains fall a little apart—there are
walnuts, fruit
trees, and poplars ; again the valley narrows,
the path just
hangs on the hillside, and I was riding
over the roofs
of village houses for some time before I
knew it. The
hills again opened, and there were
flourishing breadths
of turnips, and people digging potatoes, an
article of food
and export which was introduced by the
missionaries
forty years ago. The glen narrowed again,
and we came
upon the principal part of Marbishu—rude
stone houses
in tiers, burrowing deeply into the hills, with
rock above
and rock below on the precipitous sides of a
noisy torrent,
crossed by two picturesque log bridges, one of
the wildest
situations I have ever seen, and with a
wintry chill about
it, for the sun at this season deserts it at
three. Eude,
primitive, colourless, its dwellings like the
poorest cow-
sheds, its church like a Canadian ice-house,
clinging to
mountain sides and spires of rock, so long
as I re-
member anything I shall remember
Marbishu.

Steep narrow paths and steep rude steps

brought us
.to a three-sided yard, with a rough verandah
where cook-
ing and other operations were going on,
and at the
entrance we were cordially welcomed by
QasJia Ishai,
the priest. After ascertaining that it would
be very
dangerous to go farther, I crossed the river to
the church,
which is one of the finest in the country, and a
place of
pilgrimage. The village is noted for its
religious faith-